

An Essay
on
Quackery in "High Places,"
Respectfully Submitted
To the Faculty of the
Homoeopathic Medical College
of Pennsylvania
by
Mortimer Hlocum
of
Syracuse,
New-York.

January, 30th 1835.

—Id immedicabile vulnus

Ense recidendum, ne pars sincera trahatur
Epist.

But an incurable wound (or ulcer) should be removed with the knife, or the surrounding parts will be drawn in or effected by it.

There perhaps is no science that has numbered more Charlatans among its advocates than that of medicine; indeed from the earliest period in the annals of medicine down to the present time those authorized by law to administer medicine to the sick have always met with a powerful opposition from that peculiar class of personages denominated Quacks; and we have reason to believe in many instances that the latter class have been more in the right than the former; else why is it that some of the most valuable medicines those termed "shut anchors" by the regular profession have emanated originally from mere Quacks.

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The very fact that Quacks have succeeded as well as they have compared with the authorized practitioner shows that there must have been something wrong in regard to the principles of medicine, otherwise we might have expected that centuries ago the Profession would have discovered the medicinal virtues of the mineral mercury and other of our most valuable remedies at the present day, instead of leaving them for the mere medical pretender to bring before the public.

If there is any virtue in medicine, it is but right to infer that we should have some positive means by which that virtue might be discovered. I do not believe that nature ever bestowed any great blessing upon us at any time without first giving us some clue by which a knowledge of its adaptation to our case might be obtained.

Now it is admitted by all that there are certain substances termed medicines that are beneficial in restoring a diseased organism to its healthy standard, and it is evident that a positive knowledge by which we could know when any particular medicine should be given for any particular diseased action would be of the utmost importance, in fact without this is not medicine more a curse than a blessing? I think nature intended that the Physician should know when and how to administer every drug, and it is right to infer that she should give him some clue or even an immutable law by which this knowledge might be obtained.

We do not believe that nature leaves things at such loose ends particularly in regard to a science whose object is to keep body and soul together, as to allow a

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knowledge of such infinite importance to be obtained solely by experiments upon the sick at the very time when this knowledge is called into requisition, it looks too much like a sacrifice on her part to accomplish an end which she could better do in a more direct way; and we believe that in proportion to the importance of a knowledge of the curative action of drugs have we a positive means of ascertaining that action; and that it is the proving of drugs upon the healthy and the law to be Similia Similibus Curantur. It is not necessary for us to attempt to prove this law at this time, suffice it to say that it is as easily proven as the law of gravitation or any other of Nature's laws.

Now if it is true that we can discover the medicinal and curative action of drugs by proving them upon the healthy, it must

follow that every one who will administer a single drug or a compound without first ascertaining what particular symptoms indicate it, is a Charlatan, be his condition what it may; This is the definition which we apply to a Charlatan or Quack; and the standard by which all who ^{practice} prescribe medicine should be judged. This at first may appear like too severe a definition, but a moments reflection I think will show that it is the true one; for if Quackery is the administering of medicines without knowing their curative action, it does seem as though the law by which the knowledge of this action is obtained should be the standard by which they should be judged; in fact if this is not the dividing line where will you draw it? for Quackery at the present day is carried on to an enormous extent, and flourishes and is sanctioned even in "high places", for

where is the eminent Physician who has no law
to guide him in the selection of his remedies
whose name cannot be found in some way con-
nected with some quack nostrum; even they
who occupy the position of Teachers, and whose
duty it should be to teach some immutable
law for the administration of medicines,
even they sanction the empirical use of drugs;
and also our literature both in and out of
the ordinary practice is turning with praise
of the virtues of some quack nostrums, and
even those compounds lauded almost to the
skies by some high in authority, are
denounced with equal enthusiasm by
others equally deserving of our confidence,
so that we see that Quackery and the
prevailing practice are so insensibly con-
nected together that the ordinary accep-
tation of the term is at best only
equivocal. *Thanking God that they*

We are well aware that in accordance with our definition a sweeping distinction is made by which a large majority of those who have prescribed medicine both in ancient and modern days will fall beneath that approbrious title which we hate so to mention; And we are also aware that this title would be applied to those who might be termed the fathers of Medicine, whose names occupy an enviable place on the page of history on account of the valuable discoveries which they have made in medical science, and even some of the most gigantic minds and brilliant intellects that have ever adorned any science according to our definition and the present state of science can now only be regarded as being in error. And even in these latter days those sitting in "high places" thinking themselves mighty in knowledge, and thanking God that they

"are not as other men are" and even despising the only law "whereby man can be saved", if tried by our standard would be found wanting.

Such being the state of medical ^{science} at the present day it is not to be wondered that Quacks and their nostrums should flourish equally with the regular practitioner and his prescriptions, all being founded equally alike upon uncertainty, and having for the groundwork of their action the power which they have of acting upon the credulity of the masses.

With such a complete chaos of prescriptions for diseases afloat in the world it is not strange that conscientious men in other respects should leave the dull routine of what is termed the "regular profession" to hazard some new compound perhaps equally meritorious in the vain hope of bettering their miserable condition;

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But alas forever after they must be branded
as Quacks. We do not wish to be under-
stood that all who are denominated Quacks
are devoid of moral integrity by any means
for we have infinitely more regard for a
conscientious quack according to our def-
inition, than we have for a mulish "regu-
lar" who will not yield when the truth
stands out boldly before him.

It is unnecessary to attempt to show
the amount of evil and misery that has
arisen from the want of the true knowl-
edge of the action of medicine; both the
vast amount of happiness that might have
been secured had this knowledge been
possessed, and also the direct suffering
which has been occasioned by the barbor-
ous practice of experimenting upon man
when the vital spark has been almost
extinguished, thus giving rise to the true

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saying that "medicine has destroyed more
lives than war".

It is a melancholy thought to contemplate.
But the question arises how is it to be rem-
edied? we would hope that this is not an
incurable state of affairs; but that we by
great assiduity and unremitting perse-
verance, may be able to insinuate our
universal and immutable law of cure
into the minutest recipes of the diseased
organism of the Medical world at the pres-
ent time, by which the malignant dys-
crasias which now rankle within its sys-
tem may gradually, healthfully but
surely yield to the benign influence of
one of God's sublimest laws.

Thus we as Homoeopaths would cure this
diseased action in the Medical world as we do many
others, which our more self styled scientific Brethren
tell us can only be remedied by total & -

cision with the knife.

But there is also a species of practice that savors strong of Quackery according to our definition, and is to be found among those who understand the Homoeopathic law of cure; it is the habit which some very correct practitioners in other respects have of leaving some of our long tried and more important medicines, to run after some new discovered remedy, which they will not prove themselves, nor have patience to wait till a proving is furnished by others, but give it as they say according to the law Similia when in fact they are not acquainted with a single symptom which it produces, except perhaps what they may discover from the patients to whom they are administering it, who will present more symptoms of the disease than of the medicine. This is certainly too much an empirical practice.

and should be discountenanced entirely by the whole profession; its tendency is decidedly bad. I do not think that there is any other one thing from which we need to apprehend so much danger to our law of cure as this empirical manner of prescribing.

Another practice indulged in to a considerable extent within the precincts of our sublime law and equally condemnatory with the former is the alternating or administering some half dozen remedies in quick succession, for what is the difference in administering a compound of which we are totally ignorant, or its elements in such rapid succession that the symptoms produced are as new to us as those of the original compound; a moments reflection will show that by adopting this course we will soon have symptoms to prescribe for entirely new to us being an admixture of the symptoms of the disease and the combined action of the

different remedies which we have given.

There is also another species of practice among Homoeopaths that "savors of the Pill Box"; it is the too prevalent custom in epidemic and other diseases of administering so called specific Homoeopathic remedies for the name of the disease regardless of the symptoms.

"Our Homoeopathic literature also often savors of the Pill Box"; and if there is one situation higher than another, and from which the first inroads of Quackery should be guarded with a vigilant eye, it is here, for in this is our union and our strength.

But all these species of Quackery although carried on in "high places" we think are curable and will not therefore fall beneath the conditions of our text. But there is a condition of Quackery that is totally incurable, and this is the species that should be wholly removed or else the adjoining parts will be

come involved and corrupted by it; - this is the Quackery wilfully indulged in after one has beheld the beauty and certainty of action of our law of cure, and this we believe to be incurable.

If a man after he has occupied that high position which a knowledge and application of our law of cure will place him in, and can feel that he possesses as it were the keys of life and death and can be enabled to look down with serene complacency upon the jargon and confusion which reigns in the ordinary mode of practice beneath him. I say if from this elevated position and with this amount of light before his eyes, he will for the "almighty dollar" or any other reason return like the "dog to his vomit" to the empirical use of drugs - if there be such a thing as total depravity we should think that such a man would be the very embodiment of it, for it is little less than murder, for he might have saved life and would not.

An Essay

on

Cholera Infantum

Respectfully Submitted

To the Faculty of the

Homoeopathic Medical College

of Pennsylvania

by

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